

WILMSLOW URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1910.

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PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GENERAL CHARACTERS OF THE DISTRICT.

THE WILMSLOW URBAN DISTRICT is situated in the county of Cheshire, about ten miles south of Manchester. The London & North-Western Railway from Manchester to Crewe runs through it. It forms part of the Cheshire plain, and is traversed by the valley of the River Bollin. Its area comprises 5,090 acres. The subsoil is chiefly sand and clay. On Lindow Common, and in its neighbourhood, there is peat. The district is partly suburban and partly rural in character. The population was 7,361 at the census of 1901, and was estimated to be 8,300 at the middle of 1910. A considerable part of the population is residential, chiefly composed of persons engaged in business in Manchester, with their families. There are no large manufactories in the district. Some of the inhabitants work at a cotton mill at Styal and some at a bleach works at Handforth, places just outside the district. Many are employed in the ordinary local trades, whilst others are occupied with agriculture.

BIRTHS AND DEATHS.

During the year 171 births and 83 deaths were registered. Two births were illegitimate. The birthrate was 20.6 per thousand of the estimated population, as against 19 for the year 1909, and was .4 below the average for the preceding ten years. The death-rate was 10 per thousand, as against 11.6 for 1909, and was 3.4 below the average for the preceding ten years.

There were 4 deaths of infants under one year of age (all legitimate). In 1909 there were 8 such deaths, and the average for the preceding ten years was 14. The Infantile Mortality, *i.e.*, the death-rate of infants under one year per thousand births, was 23.4, as against 50 for the year 1909, and 85.7, the average for the preceding ten years. It is the lowest recorded during this period. Of the 4 deaths, 2 were due to prematurity, another was accidental (overlying), and the fourth was due to gastritis.

The Infantile Mortality has been low during the last four years corresponding with comparatively low rates in the county and in England and Wales. The following table gives the rates for the preceding ten years.

Year.	Wilmslow.	Cheshire.	England and Wales
1900	96	143	154
1901	148	150	151
1902	57	119	133
1903	77	126	132
1904	145	144	145
1905	83	119	128
1906	114	118	132
1907	65	112	118
1908	43	113	121
1909	50	99	109

The lower rates of the last few years are probably in part due to improved sanitary conditions and to the absence of extremes of heat and cold. A mild winter and a cool wet summer mean less disease. During 1910 there was not much epidemic disease in Wilmslow. This also may have been a factor in the exceptionally low infantile mortality. With such low rates prevailing, there has been no proposal to adopt the Notification of Births Act. At the present time the district enjoys the advantages conferred by the adoption of the Act, as the District Midwife attends most of the working women in their confinements and is well qualified to give them advice on the care of their infants.

There were 5 deaths between the ages of 1 and 5 years, none between 5 and 15, 6 between 15 and 25, 25 between 25 and 65, and 43 at 65 years and upwards.

The corresponding figures for 1909 were : 9 deaths between 1 and 5 years, 4 between 5 and 15, none between 15 and 25, 28 between 25 and 65, and 48 at 65 years and upwards.

Causes and numbers of deaths (excluding those under one year) :—

Measles	1	Bronchitis.....	8
Epidemic influenza	1	Pneumonia	3
Gastritis.....	4	Diseases and accidents of childbirth..	1
Pulmonary tuberculosis	4	Heart diseases	8
Other tuberculous diseases	1	Accidents	7
Cancer	10	All other causes	31

Six Inquests were held, as against none in 1909.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

20 cases of Infectious disease were notified, viz. :—

- 2 Diphtheria.
- 16 Scarlet Fever.
- 1 Enteric Fever.
- 1 Puerperal Fever.

The Diphtheria cases occurred in March and August respectively: one in Davenport Green and the other in Oak Lane. The source of infection in neither case could be found. One case was removed to Baguley and the other isolated at home.

Five cases of Scarlet Fever were notified in January (two in the same house), one in February, two in April, two in August, in the same house, and the remaining seven occurred in September, October, and November, two being in the same house. The January cases appeared to have arisen in connection with a case imported from another district in December. The two in August were undoubtedly importations. Four of the autumn cases developed at the northern end of the village, and probably had some connection with each other, though the primary source of infection could not be traced. A case in November was that of a boy attending the Dean Row School. On examining the other scholars one boy was found whose hands were “peeling.” He was kept at home for a time as a precautionary measure.

Thirteen of the cases of Scarlet Fever were removed to Baguley.

The only case of Enteric was that of a boy who was found to be suffering from the disease immediately after his return from a boarding school. He was treated at home.

The case of Puerperal Fever did not occur in the practice of a midwife.

No deaths occurred from notifiable diseases.

During the second half of the year, the School Authorities notified cases of suspected infectious diseases occurring amongst the scholars. They included the following :—

Measles	18
Whooping Cough	3
Mumps	4
Chicken Pox	15
Influenza	1
German Measles	1

The Measles cases were confined to the Fulshaw C.E. School, and occurred in November and December.

Four of the cases of Chicken Pox were reported from the Dean Row School and nine from the Council School.

In several cases, children were reported to be absent suffering from “fever,” “sore throat” or “a rash on the body.” In doubtful cases such as these, the Medical Officer visited the house to make enquiries.

A child, aged one year, died from Measles and Broncho-pneumonia.

BACTERIOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS.

The arrangement with the Public Health Laboratory, by which the Council pays for the examination of pathological specimens as an aid to the diagnosis of Diphtheria, Enteric and Pulmonary Tuberculosis (Phthisis), has now been in existence ten years. It is freely made use of by medical practitioners. During 1910 there were examined 7 throat swabs for diphtheria, 3 blood specimens for enteric, and 5 specimens of sputum for tuberculosis.

DISINFECTION.

In all cases, premises were disinfected by spraying with a solution of formaldehyde.

If bedding, infected clothing, etc., could not be disinfected by chemical disinfectants or boiling it was destroyed.

By arrangements made between the Bucklow Joint Hospital Board and the Manchester Corporation, the Corporation will provide a disinfecting van and remove infected clothing, bedding, &c., to a disinfecting station, disinfect it, and return it.

It is often less costly, however, to compensate the owner and destroy a bed or mattress rather than pay the expenses of disinfection by the Corporation.



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HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

There is a considerable number of old cottages in the district. On the whole, they are in good sanitary condition, and none have been condemned during the year.

Complaints have been made that there is a deficiency of cottages. The supply certainly does not exceed the demand. There are few, if any, cottages empty at the present time. Families wishing to remove have to wait until a house becomes vacant, and one hears of people who wish to start housekeeping having to wait in lodgings. Also, some families would no doubt like to exchange the old cottages they live in for new ones at a moderate rent.

The complaints would appear to refer chiefly to a lack of cottages at about 4/- a week. Very few at this rent have been built in recent years, or are likely to be built in the future. In 1910, eight working-class houses were built : four are let at 4/- a week, and are situated two miles from the station ; the others will command a considerably higher rent.

It is difficult to say what the demand really amounts to. There is no evidence of overcrowding, which one would expect to find if there were a real deficiency of accommodation ; nor are there many people working in the district and living outside for this reason.

It must be admitted, however, that the demand is fully up to the supply, and that there is some inconvenience felt by people who want cottages. The question does not appear to be of great urgency at the present time, though it may soon require the consideration of the Council.

MILK SUPPLY.

There are 30 Cowsheds on the register. They were all inspected during the year. In five instances notices were served for defects. No legal proceedings were taken. Regulations are in force under the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops' Order.

The cowsheds may be said to be satisfactory as regards air space, lighting, and ventilation. Attention has been specially directed to the lime-washing of ceilings and partitions between stalls. In some cases the cows are well groomed ; generally there is room for improvement in this respect. The attention of milkers has been called to the advisability of washing the hands and cleaning the cow's udder before milking.

There is no inspection of cows for tuberculosis. A periodical inspection by a veterinary surgeon would be of great value.

WATER SUPPLY.

The water supplied by the Stockport Corporation is obtained in Wilmslow from bore-holes in the New Red Sandstone.

Before distribution it is submitted to a softening process, in which lime only is used, in a plant called the Archbutt-Deely.

As raised from the bore-holes, the hardness is 14 degrees (Clarke's scale). After treatment the hardness is 7 degrees.

The supply is good and ample for all requirements.

Some parts of the rural area are supplied from wells.

No complaints have been made during the year.

No samples have been analysed.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

There are eight slaughter houses in the district. They are regularly inspected, often at times of slaughtering. They are in fair condition.

There is no inspector with a special certificate in meat inspection.

No carcasses nor parts of carcasses have been condemned for tuberculosis during the year.

A public slaughter house is one of the needs of the district.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

The sewerage is treated by :—

- (a) Precipitation tanks and land.
- (b) Broad irrigation.

No complaints were made in 1910 in regard to the outfall works.

A few parts of the rural area (Morley and The Hough) are without a proper sewerage system.

No new works were carried out during the year.

POLLUTION OF RIVERS

No complaints were received during the year.

DISPOSAL OF EXCRETA.

The disposal of excreta is effected by water-carriage and ashpit privies. Where considered necessary, owners have been advised to replace the latter by water closets, which are also put in all new houses.

REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL OF HOUSE REFUSE.

This is still carried out by the occupiers, who in some cases request and pay the Council to do the work for them. When requested, the Council empty midden-privies every three months, dry ashpits monthly, and dustbins weekly and fortnightly. It is to be hoped that before long the Council will take over the entire work and establish a refuse destructor.

BYELAWS.

Byelaws are in force relating to New Streets and Buildings, Common Lodging Houses (1), Slaughter Houses (8), and Cleansing and Scavenging. There are none relating to houses let in lodgings, and there are no offensive trades in the district.

No new byelaws were adopted during 1910.

NUISANCES.

Thirty preliminary notices have been served for the abatement of nuisances, followed in seven cases by official notices. There was one action for a smoke nuisance. All the nuisances were abated.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT.

The usual systematic inspections have been made. Section 22 of the Public Health Acts (Amendment Act), 1890, is in force in the district.

Sanitary conveniences are provided for both sexes in factories and workshops. Twenty is the maximum number of persons to each convenience.

BAKEHOUSES.

The sanitary condition of the bakehouses is satisfactory. The requirements of the District Council in regard to existing underground bakehouses are complied with.

LODGING HOUSE.

There is one common lodging house. It is regularly inspected, and is in a fairly satisfactory sanitary condition.

SCHOOLS.

The sanitary condition and water supply of the schools are satisfactory. None of the schools were closed in 1910 on account of infectious disease.

The medical inspection of school children is carried out by inspectors appointed by the County Council.

PREVENTION OF CONSUMPTION.

There is no system of notification in vogue, except in regard to poor persons under the care of the Guardians, in accordance with the Public Health (Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1908. Three cases were notified: two residing in the district, and a third after removal to Knutsford Workhouse. The houses are inspected, advice given, and disinfection carried out when necessary. The only hospital accommodation for advanced cases of the disease is in the Union Workhouse Infirmary. Early cases have been treated at the Manchester Consumption Hospital, but the Council has no arrangement with the hospital. The Hospital provides sanatorium treatment at Bowdon and Delamere.

MIDWIVES ACT, 1902.

There are 5 midwives in the county register residing in the district.

Their case books and appliances have been inspected and are in order. Their houses are satisfactory.

Sixty-five cases were attended during 1910.

Three records of sending for medical help were received.

No deaths of mothers and one death of an infant before the attendance of a medical practitioner were notified.

No still-births were notified.

No cases of puerperal fever, and no cases of other infectious disease are known to have arisen in cases attended by registered midwives.

No midwives have been reported to the supervising authority.

ALFRED BYERS,

Medical Officer of Health.

